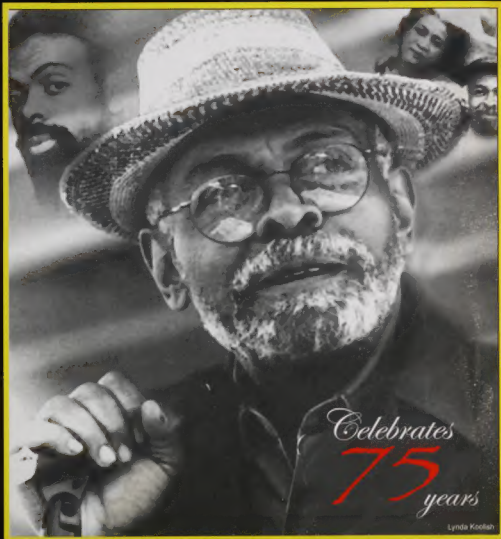


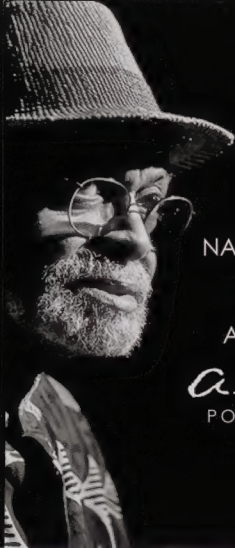
Amiri Baraka



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Amiri Baraka

Amiri Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in 1934 in Newark, NJ. After leaving Howard University and the Air Force, he moved to the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1957 and co-edited the avant-garde literary magazine *Yugen* and founded Totem Press, which first published works by Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and others.

He published his first volume of poetry, *Preface to a Twenty-Volume Suicide Note*, in 1961. His *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963) is still regarded as the seminal work on Afro-American music and culture. He also edited *The Moderns: An Anthology of New Writing in America*, published in 1963. His reputation as a playwright was established with the production of *Dutchman* at Cherry Lane Theatre in New York on March 24, 1964. The controversial play subsequently won an Obie Award for Best Off-Broadway Play and was made into a film. The play was revived by Cherry Lane Theatre in January 2007 and has been reproduced around the world.

In 1965, Jones moved to Harlem where he founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School. BARTS lasted only one year but had a lasting influence on the direction of Afro American Arts. BARTS sent five trucks a day into the Harlem community -- art show on one truck, poetry reading from the other, music on another, drama the other - where performances would be given in a changed location each day. Vacant lots, playgrounds, and housing projects pushed art that would be Black as Bessie Smith, mass-based, revolutionary, and taken to the people; reflecting the intensity of the entire Black Liberation Movement. In 1966, when BARTS was dissolved, Baraka returned to Newark, his hometown, and set up with his wife, Amina Baraka - who was a founder of Newark's "Loft" a local venue of contemporary - The Spirit House and The Spirit House Movers, that brought drama, music and poetry from across the country. During this period, the Barakas founded The Committee for Unified Newark (CFUN) and The Congress of African People. Both CFUN and The Congress of African People led the election of Kenneth A. Gibson as the first Black Mayor of a major northeastern city spearheaded by the 1972 Gary (IN) Convention. In 1968, Baraka co-edited *Black Fire: Anthology of Afro-American Writing* with Larry Neal.

Amiri and Amina Baraka edited *The Music: Meditations of Jazz & Blues (Morrow)* and *Confirmation: An Anthology of African-American Women*, which won an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. The *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka* was published in 1984. His recent publications are *Y's/Why's/Wise* (3rd World 1992) *Punk Lore* (Littoral 1993), *Eulogies* (Marsilio, 1994), *Transbluesency* (Marsilio 1996), *Somebody Blew Up America & Other Poems* (Nehesi 2002).

Amiri and Amina Baraka founded Kimako's Blues People, a multimedia arts space, from a small theater in their Newark home. Amiri founded the jazz/poetry ensemble Blue Ark which has played at the Berlin Festival, and throughout the U.S. His Jazz opera *Money*, with Swiss composer George Gruntz, was performed in part at George Wein's New York Jazz Festival in the early 90's. *Primitive World*, with music by David Murray, was performed at Sweet Basil, the Nuyorican Café and the Black Drama Festival in Winston Salem, NC. His *Bumpy: A Bopera* with music by Max Roach was performed in 1991 at Newark Symphony Hall and at San Diego Repertory. Amiri founded the New Arkestra, a big band working to produce a living archive of this music.

In the fall of 2002, Baraka, who had been named New Jersey Poet Laureate by then Governor James McGreevey, came under fire from the NJ office of the Anti-Defamation League, the New Jersey Assembly and others after a reading of his controversial poem "Somebody Blew Up America" about the 9/11 attacks. After reading the poem at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation's annual poetry festival in Stanhope, NJ, Baraka's \$10,000 stipend was rescinded and the Poet Laureate position eliminated in 2003 by Gov. McGreevey who resigned in disgrace in 2004. In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Baraka's case in which he asserted that his First Amendment rights were violated. Baraka bounced back from the melee and remains a figure in demand at international festivals, book fairs and on university campuses. Baraka is the Poet Laureate of the Newark Public Schools appointed by former Superintendent Marion Bolden.

Amiri Baraka's numerous literary honors include fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Rockefeller Foundation Award for Drama, the Langston Hughes Award from The City College of New York, and a lifetime achievement award from the Before Columbus Foundation. He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1995. In 1994, he retired as Professor of Africana Studies at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, and in 2002 was named Poet Laureate of New Jersey and Newark Public Schools. In January 2007, his award-winning, one-act play, *Dutchman*, was revived at the new Cherry Lane Theatre in New York and received critical acclaim and international attention. His book of short stories, *Tales of the Out and the Gone* (Akashic Books) was published in late 2007. Home, his book of social essays, was re-released by Akashic Books in early 2009. *Digging: The AfroAmerican Soul of Music* (Univ. of California) was also released this year.

Amiri Baraka 75th Birthday Jazz Jam
Celebrating 75 years of a Revolutionary Life
October 7, 2009

Program

Welcome	David Muhammad AmiriB75 Coordinator
Introduction of the Master & Mistress of Ceremonies	AmiriB75 Committee Member Woodie King Jr., Producer & Sonia Sanchez, Poet and Author
African Drum Procession of The Baraka Family	AmiriB75 African Drum Ensemble
National Black Anthem	Communal Participation
<i>A Poem for My Father</i>	Ras Baraka Son of Amiri Baraka

Dinner

Touch Bayou Catering

75th Jazz Jam Tribute	AmiriB75 House Band - Steve Colson, <i>piano</i> - Andy McCloud, <i>contrabass</i> - Pheeron Akalff, <i>drums</i>
Salute to Amiri	Introduction by Woodie King Jr.

Friends and Well Wishers

Family Tributes to Amiri	Introduction by Sonia Sanchez Amina Baraka Baraka Children Baraka Grandchildren
Introduction of Amiri Baraka	Obalaji Baraka Eldest Son of Amiri Baraka

The Honoree
Amiri Baraka

- Menu -

Crudités, Cheese, Crackers, Hummus Display

*Fresh mixed raw vegetables served with our tasty spinach or ranch dip
complimented by an assortment of domestic and imported cheeses,
crackers & hummus garnished with fresh fruit*

Pasta Salad

*A blend of pasta, cucumbers,
black olives, & tomatoes in the chef's vinaigrette dressing*

Garden Salad

A mix of fresh salad greens, cucumbers, tomatoes & bell peppers

Herb Chicken

Fresh chicken marinated with fresh herbs & baked until juicy

or

Bar-B-Que Salmon

Fresh Salmon baked and lightly covered in our bar-b-que sauce

Rice Pilaf

Vegetable Medley

Dinner Rolls

Dessert

Spiced Rum Cake

Beverages

Cabernet Sauvignon

Chardonnay

Iced Tea,

Water

Coffee

Tea



Lawrence Hanin
Chair

People's Organization for Progress

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Mary Weaver
Vice-Chair/Secretary General

Angenetta Robinson
Treasurer

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CONGRATULATIONS AMIRI BARAKA

ON YOUR 75TH BIRTHDAY!

May you have many, many more...

With a special love from the

People's Organization for Progress

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

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Celebrating its 45th Anniversary

(New Heritage was founded by the late Roger Furman in 1964)

Congratulates

Amiri Baraka

On the occasion of his 75th birthday

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Jamal Joseph, Executive Artistic Director

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